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SOME NOTES ON TOTEMISM.

WHAT is a Totem? Broadly, the badge of a clan or tribe, but something signifying a great deal more than mere political or social alliance. It is not only a tribal emblem, but also a family signal; not merely a symbol of nationality, but also an expression of religion; not simply a bond of union among primitive peoples, but also a regulator of the marriage laws and of other social institutions. As defined by Mr J. G. Frazer, a totem is a 'class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and altogether special relation.'

The use of totems seems to have been first noticed among the North American Indians, and the word itself is an Indian one. It is taken from the language of the Ojibways or Chippewas, a branch of the Algonquin race, who inhabited the region near Lake Superior. It is said to have been introduced into our literature by one Long, an Indian interpreter, who published a book of travels in 1791. Among the American Indians its meaning is clear enough; for with them the totems are well defined, although often curious in character. Thus, in the Ojibway tribe there are no fewer than twenty-three different totems, or clan divisions. Nine of these are quadrupeds, marking out the wolf, the bear, the beaver, and other clans; eight are birds, five are fishes, and one is the snake. In other words, the members of the tribe who carry these devices by so doing mark themselves as belonging to a distinct division of it, to be for all time and for certain practical purposes distinguished and separated from the other divisions.

It is easy enough with totems of this character to imagine a basis of worship as the origin of the tribal badge, but it is not easy to see the meaning in other cases. For instance, the totems of some of the other Indian tribes are such things as corn, potato, tobacco-plant, and reed-grass; as medicine, tent, lodge, bonnet, leggings, and knife; as sun,

earth, sand, salt, sea, snow, ice, water, and rain; as thunder, wind, and even as 'many seasons.' Now, it is hardly possible to presuppose worship in the case of many of these totems, and indeed of some of them it is evident the pictorial representation, or concrete expression in any form, was impossible. But a totem may exist without visible expression, and its nature may be indicated by a species of freemasonry.

Next to the North American Indians, the aboriginal tribes of Australia present the most developed form of totemism of any peoples of our time. Among the Australians is to be found the same use of totems as among the Indians, and chiefly taken from the animal kingdom. There are kangaroo, opossum, iguana, emu, bandicoot, and black-snake divisions among the Kamilaroi tribes. There are also eagle, crow, water, mountain, swamp, river, hot-wind, and sun totems; and the first question asked by an Australian black of a stranger is, 'Of what murdoo [family or clan] are you?' In fact, in Australia the totem seems more of a family than a clan name.

So in Africa, among the Hottentots and Bechuanas, are found crocodile-men, monkey-men, buffalo-men, and such family names as Horse, Lion, Sheep, Ass, &c. The head of the family is the 'great man' of the animal whose name he bears, and the members of the tribe will not eat the flesh or use the skin of its protecting animal.

Professor Robertson Smith in his work on Early Arabia tells us that many of the Arab tribes take their names from animals, such as the lion, the panther, the wolf, the bear, the dog, the fox, the hyena, the sheep, &c.; and that the animal whose name is borne by the tribe is not used for food by that tribe, and is otherwise treated with respect. Among the hill-tribes of India, similar clan-badges are also to be found, as the Heron, Hawk, Crow, and Eel clans of the Oraon and Mundari tribes of Chota-Nagpur.

The geographical distribution of totemism is very wide, too wide for us to follow within the limits of this article. In North America it pre-

vails among all the Indian tribes, but not among the Eskimos. In Central America it is found among some of the tribes of Panama; and in South America it is found in Colombia, Venezuela, Guiana, and Patagonia; and traces also have been supposed among the aborigines (not the Incas) of Peru. In Australia it is universal—we speak, of course, always of aboriginal peoples—and in Africa it appears to be general in the south and west, and on the equator. It is found alike in Bengal and in Siberia, in Polynesia and in China.

The Chinese system merits a word; and it is noteworthy that, on the authority of a Russian traveller quoted by Mr McLennan, 'a characteristic feature in Central Asiatic traditions is the derivation of their origin from some animal.' Thus, the Tele people are said to have sprung from the marriage of a wolf and a beautiful Hun princess; the Tugas believe themselves to be descended from a she-wolf; the Tibetans from a dog; the Mongol khans from a blue wolf and a white hind, &c. The Chinese expression for their own people is *Pih-Sing*, which means 'the hundred family-names.' In fact it is computed that there are about four hundred family-names in China, and intermarriage is forbidden between persons of the same family-name. In this connection it may be noted that some of the Australian tribes have a legend to the effect that the use of totems was introduced by command of the Great Spirit to put a stop to consanguineous marriages.

Some curious items referring to totemism are to be found in Dr Turner's book about Samoa. Thus, it is said that if a Turtle-man ate of a turtle he grew very ill, and the voice of the turtle was heard in his inside, saying: 'He ate me: I am killing him.' If a Prickly Sea-urchin-man consumed one of these shellfish, a prickly sea-urchin grew in his body and killed him. If a Mullet-man ate a mullet, he squinted. If a Cockle-man carried away a cockle, it appeared on some part of his person; and if he ate it, it grew on his nose. If a Banana-man used a banana leaf for a cap, he became bald. If a Butterfly-man caught a butterfly, it struck him dead. If a Fowl-man ate a fowl, delirium and death resulted. And so on—all going to show that among some totem peoples, if not among all, the totem has something of the quality of a fetich, as well as the significance of a family emblem.

But, as Mr J. G. Frazer shows, totems are of at least three kinds. There is, first, the Clan totem, common to a whole clan, and passing by inheritance from generation to generation. There is, second, the Sex totem, common either to all the males or to all the females of a tribe, to the exclusion of the other sex. And there is, third, the Individual totem, belonging to a single individual, and not passing to his descendants. There are also Cross totems and some other kinds, which, however, are really only varieties of the Clan totem, and this last is the most important of all.

Regarding Clan totemism, it is to be noted that the relation of mutual help and protection includes also the totem itself; that is to say, if a man takes care of his totem, he expects the totem to return the compliment. If the totem is a dangerous animal, it must not hurt his clansmen. The Scorpion-men of Senegambia declare

that the most deadly scorpions will run over their bodies without hurting them. There is a Snake clan in Cyprus which holds to a similar belief. Among the Moxos of Peru, a candidate for the office of medicine-man must allow himself to be bitten by a tiger (the totem); and if he survives, he proves his kinship and fitness. Among the Crocodile clan of the Bechuanas, if a man is bitten by a crocodile, or even has water splashed on him by one, he is expelled from the clan, as one esteemed unworthy by the totem. But a totem must do more than not injure—it must help. Members of Serpent clans in various parts of the world profess to heal by their touch those who have been bitten by serpents. There is a Seaweed clan in Samoa which, when it goes out in canoes to fight, throws seaweed into the water to hinder the flight of the enemy; if the enemy try to pick up the weed, it sinks, but rises again as soon as some of the totem clan approach it. The kangaroo warns the Kangaroo tribes, and the crow warns the Crow tribes of Australia of approaching danger. This is all very well when the totem is a bird, beast, or fish; but one does not very well see how it will work when the totem is a stick, a stone, a cloud, an element, or a colour.

The totem bond is a much stronger affair than what we regard as the bond of blood or family. All the members of a totem clan regard each other as kinsmen, or brothers and sisters, and are bound to help each other. The Clan totem represents both a religious and a social system, because all the men and women who call themselves by the name of the totem believe themselves to be of one blood, descendants of a common ancestor, and bound to each other by common obligations and a common faith.

Some of the social aspects of totemism may be briefly referred to. For one thing, the totem bond is stronger than the domestic bond. In every totem tribe there must be members of two or more totem clans, because the males cannot marry the females of their own totem. If, then, a blood-feud breaks out between their clans, husband and wife will have to take opposite sides, and the children will be arrayed with one parent against the other, according as the custom of the people may be to trace descent through the mother or the father. Then, if anything happens to a man, all his clansmen are entitled to satisfaction, not from the aggressor alone, but from the entire clan to which the aggressor belongs. A curious illustration of this has been noted among the Goajiros of Colombia in South America. This tribe is divided into some twenty or thirty clans with descent in the female line; and it is said that if a man happens to cut himself with his own knife, to fall off his own horse, or to hurt himself in any way, his mother's clan immediately demand blood-money from him for injuring one of their totems!

Then, as to marriage, persons of the same totem may not enter into conjugal union. This rule is what is called exogamy. Some tribes say of those who marry within the clan, that their bones will dry up and they will die. Among the Australian tribes, death is the regular penalty for a breach of this rigorous rule.

Speaking generally, it may be said that marriage prohibition extends only to a man's own totem

clan. But there are also numerous cases where the prohibition extends further. Thus, a Panther of the Creek Indians may not marry a Panther; but he is also prohibited from marrying a Wild-cat woman. The Senecas were divided into two groups of four totems each: the Bear, Wolf, Beaver, and Turtle clans could not intermarry; nor could the Deer, Snipe, Heron, and Hawk clans; but a member of any one of the totems of one group was compelled to seek a mate in one of the totems of the other group.

This peculiarity seems most marked among the Indian tribes, but is also to be found among the Australians; and among these last, a very remarkable feature has been noticed—namely, that divisions of one tribe have recognised equivalents in other tribes even when the languages are different. Thus, a native can travel over hundreds of miles and be supplied with wives by the various tribes he sojourns with, for difference of language does not prevent him recognising the signs by which he can tell whether the tribal division is one into which he can legally marry.

It is impossible to go thoroughly into the origin and nature of totemism within the limits of an article such as this. But enough has been said to show that its main use among primitive peoples has been with reference to marriage. As to whether or not it took its origin in some religious idea, or whether the religious aspect has been an aftergrowth of the social custom, opinions continue to differ widely. In brief, it may be said that Mr McLennan thought that totemism was necessarily connected with animal-worship; that Mr Herbert Spencer thinks it was a confused sort of ancestor-worship; that Sir John Lubbock thinks it originated in nature-worship; and Mr Staniland Wake thinks that it had a good deal to do with the oriental belief in the transmigration of the soul, and was a combination of nature-worship and animal-worship.

JOHN VALE'S GUARDIAN.

By DAVID CHRISTIE MURRAY,
Author of 'VAL STRANGE,' 'JOSEPH'S COAT,'
'RAINBOW GOLD,' etc.

CHAPTER X.

It may be supposed that Isaiah made a purposed detour, or that his business led him away from the high-road. In either case the boys saw no more of him, though they bore straight on for some seven or eight miles before resting. They were excellent pedestrians, both; and after their parting with Isaiah they walked in better heart than before. They had an elder's sanction for their enterprise, however reluctantly expressed; and even John felt a little the brighter for the encounter, though in a twilight kind of way. They bought the envelope and the postage stamp, according to promise, and William wrote the address at the stationer's counter in his round school hand.

They were dusty and a little footsore when at sunset they entered the old-fashioned town of Warwick. Its cobbled streets and ancient gables looked unhomelike to William's eyes; and John clung to his protecting companion's sleeve, as if the strangeness of the place frightened him. Will's first business was to secure a lodging for

the night, but he was shy of making inquiries, and looked about rather hopelessly. People who walked briskly in the streets seemed too busy and important with their own affairs to be accosted, and idlers looked too unconcerned and unsympathetic. The two lads drifted hither and thither, reading the legend 'Lodgings for Travellers' or 'Beds for Single Men' in windows in some of the by-streets, but repelled by the aspect of the houses. Will was afraid of the inns because of the slenderness of his resources; and from a native and cultivated prejudice in favour of cleanliness could not bring himself to face the lodging-houses. The spring night was closing fast, and the air was growing chilly. It had been passably fine all day, but now a cold sprinkle of rain and a keen wind gave a spur to his halting intent. The street they stood in was quite lonely, and lights behind the blinds of the houses made the outer night doubly dreary by comparison with the possibilities of comfort and warmth within.

'Come along, Jack. We'll speak to the next we meet, and ask where we can get a bed.'

A brisk footstep sounded at the end of the darkening street, and they moved towards it.

'If you please, sir,' said Will, and the passenger pausing, looked down upon him, 'can you tell me where we can get a lodging for the night?'

'Where you can get it?'—The stranger paused inquiringly.

'A lodging for the night.'

'I do not—know him,' said the stranger slowly.

'What is he?'

'We want to sleep somewhere; we want a bed.'

'A bed? To sleep? Oh yes. Come wiz me.'

By this time Will knew him. It was the stranger who had found him on Scott's Hills on the morning of John's disaster. If it had not been for the change in the foreigner's dress, he would have recognised him earlier; but, whereas, three-fourths of a year ago, he had looked altogether shabby and vagabond, he was now rather a dandy than otherwise, wearing a glossy silk hat and gloves, and carrying an umbrella. He made no claim on his acquaintance, but followed him silently, wondering at the chance, and feeling it to be a little adventurous and spicy.

The stranger walked briskly for a hundred yards or so, and then turned a corner, looking round his shoulder to see if the boys were following. A few yards farther on he thrust open a door which led from the street into a darkened passage. 'Come in.'

Will lingered, not altogether certain that the spice of the adventure had not a flavour of danger in it. A strange town, a lonely street, a dark house, a foreigner! A favourable combination for dealings not altogether favourable to safety.

'Come in,' the stranger repeated.

Will entered, and John followed, holding him by the sleeve. The foreigner closed the door, and left them in the dark. By-and-by they heard him calling: 'Madame! Madame Vigne!'—A female voice answered, in a foreign tongue.—'Pouvez-vous me dire?'—began the foreigner, and then plunging down a set of stairs, he became inaudible. There was a rapid smothered colloquy down below, and for all Master Will

could have told, it might have related to the sauce he and John should be cooked with. He wished he had not had the chance to address a foreigner, and had already formed some dim idea of bolting into the street and slamming the door behind him, when a streak of light appeared, and, a second or two later, a prodigiously fat woman, carrying a candle. She was still young in spite of her ponderous size, and she had a handsome face, so alight with good-humour and kindness that all the boy's vague fears vanished at the first glimpse of it.

Now it happened that Macfarlane's curriculum included a study of the French tongue for such as had parents who were prepared to pay for that luxury as an extra. Will had been a member of the French class for three or four years past; and had so profited by his studies that he had actually been able to identify the only words he had heard in the house as being fragments of the French tongue, and was inspired to conciliate this fat and smiling lady by addressing her in her own language.

'Noo voodrongs oon lee,' he said, therefore; and the fat woman, dropping as if she had been shot, plumped upon the stairs and laughed, with the candle held out towards the two young wanderers. She laughed with so extreme an abandon and helplessness that she seemed to hold out the candle in a comically despairing hope that somebody would take it from her; and John stepping forward relieved her of it. But at this she laughed the more; and since neither of the boys had the remotest idea of what it was that so tickled her fancy, they were a little inclined to think her mad. The swarthy-skinned, blue-eyed little foreigner stood by smiling, and the boys stared open-eyed.

'He speaks French, the little one,' said Madame Vigne in her own language, 'with what an accent! Oh, but with what an accent!' She wiped her eyes upon her white apron, and rose breathlessly from her seat upon the stairs. 'Where are you going, you children?' she asked in excellent English, with but the faintest tinge of a foreign tone. 'Where do you come from?'

'We are going to London,' said Will, 'and we want to get a bed for to-night, if you could tell us where, please.' He was not hurt or angry at the fat woman's laughter. Now that it was over, indeed, it seemed to make him more at home with her.

'You are going to London?' she repeated. 'What are you going to London for?'

'We are going to look for something to do there,' Will answered.

'They have run away from home,' said Madame in a rapid aside in her own tongue.—'Where do you come from?'

'From towards Liverpool, ma'am,' said Will, with perfect verbal truthfulness, but deceptive intent.

'Oh!' she answered, taking the candle from John's hand and looking first at his boots and then at Will's. 'You have not worn your shoes much to have travelled so far.—What is your name?'

'William Gregg.'

'And yours?'

'His name is John Vale.'

'He can answer for himself, I suppose.—What

is your name?'—John said nothing, but looked at her in a mild vacancy.—'What are you going to do in London, if ever you get there?'

'I shall take care of him, ma'am,' said Will; and John put a hand through his arm, as if accepting the proffered protection.

Madame Vigne laid her left hand on John's shoulder and turned him round, surveying him from top to toe. Then she went through the same performance with Will. 'They are respectable,' she said then, in another rapid aside, in her own language. 'They have run away from home, the little rogues.—You have money?' she asked a second later, addressing herself to John again.

'We haven't much, ma'am,' Will answered; 'and we must make the most of it.'

'Well,' she said, thrusting open a door which led from the narrow little hall, 'go in there.—Are you hungry?'

'Not very, ma'am,' Will responded.

'Not very,' she answered, hopping to a chair and pulling down a sliding gas bracket; 'but a little.—Very well. You shall have something to eat.—Are you a little hungry too, you boy—you with nothing to say for yourself? Are you hungry?'

'Yes, ma'am,' said John.

'Then you shall have something to eat also.' With that she lit the gas, and hopped from the chair to the floor with great apparent ease, but so heavily that she made the floor shake and the ornaments on the chimney-piece to clatter violently. 'Wait there, and see what I can do for you.—Keep an eye upon them,' she added to her small countryman, and so went from the room with a hop, skip, and jump, in odd contradiction to the massiveness of her figure.

'Be seated,' said the smiling little foreigner with a long pause between the two words, and a momentary triumph at having found the second.—The boys obeyed him, and he, seating himself opposite to them, leaned his arms upon the table and looked from one to the other.—'I have—seen you,' pointing to John; 'and you,' pointing to Will, 'before.'

'Yes, sir,' said Will; 'I know you have. I was very much obliged, sir, and so was John.—This is the gentleman who found us, Jack, the day that you were hurt.—I told him all about it, sir, afterwards.'

'Ah!' said the little foreigner. 'His fazer—where is his fazer?'

'He's dead, sir.'

'Eh, la, la! Zat is bad—bad; oh, very bad. Poor boy! He was good man, his fazer? Not?'

'Oh yes; indeed, he was, sir.'

The little foreigner nodded sympathetically and looked grave. He forbore to question further, but mechanically searching in his pockets, found the materials for a cigarette, and began to roll one with a supple dexterity of the fingers. When it was made he set it between his lips and rose to light it at the gas jet; but at the sound of Madame Vigne's footstep on the stair, sat down again without having done so. Madame appearing with a tray, set it upon a side-table, and proceeded to lay a snow-white cloth, upon which she set a dish of cold meat, a loaf, a jug of water, and plates and knives and forks for two.

'Pitch in!' she said when she had carved a liberal portion for each of the boys; and seeing that Will rather stared at this form of invitation, she dropped into a chair and laughed herself quite helpless. 'I hope that is English,' she said breathlessly as she wiped her eyes with her apron. 'You can understand? Very well. Eat. There is plenty there, and plenty more.'

The boys began to eat, gingerly and delicately, in defiance of appetite, feeling her eyes upon them.

'They are *géné*,' she said, turning away and addressing her countryman. 'They will be right by-and-by, if we leave them to themselves.—You boy, you who speak French, do you know what I am saying?—Will's stare was certificate enough of ignorance, and she turned round again to her companion.—'They are not quite little gentlemen, but they are respectable. They have run away from home. We must take care of them, and find where they come from, and send them back again.'

'I have met them before,' the little man answered her.—'Did I tell you about the boy with the wounded head?'—Madame Vigne nodded.—'That is the quiet one. The other is the boy who was with him. They tell me that the quiet boy's father is dead. He looked well-to-do, and drove a beautiful horse. He offered me money for watching by the boy; I do not know how much, but a little handful of silver. I was indifferently dressed; I was rambling to sketch.'

Madame Vigne nodded again. 'You must expect to be treated like a beggar if you look like a beggar. You dress yourself to be despised, one would think.—Oh, you are better now.' This was in answer to an appealing odd little gesture which called her attention to his personal appearance.—'You are sure these are the same boys?'

'One of them knows me again,' he answered; 'and I know both of them.'

The fat good-natured woman turned and looked at the young wanderers with a new interest. 'Wait a little,' she said. 'I will not spoil their appetite by questioning them now; but I will find out all about them by-and-by.'

It was noticeable that John did what Will did, and that he kept a watch upon him for that purpose, as if he founded himself upon him consciously or unconsciously, and depended upon him in all things for guidance. When Will pushed his plate away, John followed his example; but they had both done ample justice to the meal.

'You have finished?' asked Madame Vigne. 'You have had enough? You can eat as much as you like.—You will not eat any more? Very well. Now we will talk. Your name is William Gregg, and yours is John Vale. Very well. Where do you come from?'—No answer, but John and Will looking uncomfortably at each other and stealing shy glances at Madame.—'Ah! you will not say? Very well. Why did you run away from home?'—Still no answer, but an aspect of increased guilt on both.—'Boys cannot be allowed to run away from home. It is very naughty in boys to run away from home. You must be kept until your friends ask after you, and then you must be sent back again.'

'We're not going back again, ma'am,' said Will

very quietly, but with extreme resolution. 'We can pay for what we have had, but you mustn't stop us, ma'am. If we were sent back fifty times, we should come away again every time.'

He had tied up the four half-crowns Isaiah had given to him and his companion in the same strip of rag with the money he had originally started with, and drawing this from his pocket, he began to unroll it with trembling fingers.

'Oho!' cried Madame. 'Fie for shame! A well-bred boy to offer a lady money. No, no. I did not mean to hurt you; but put up your money and come to me, and let us have a talk.—Now, sit down there and tell me. I will be your friend. I will not be unkind to you. Do you think I am cruel? Now, look at me and tell me if you think I am cruel?'

'No, ma'am,' said Will, looking up, with a fat coaxing forefinger under his chin.

'Very well,' she answered. 'I am not cruel, and I will be kind if you will let me. Now, you must know that you are silly boys to run away from home.'

'No, ma'am,' said Master Will with mighty seriousness, 'we were not silly, really. It was quite necessary, ma'am.'

'Oho!' cried Madame again, 'it was quite necessary? Now, what made it quite necessary?'

'They want to beat Jack every day,' said Will; but this struck him as being so inadequate to the case, and he felt so helpless to explain it all, that he went quite doggedly silent. Madame leaning forward, put an arm about him, and made a motion to draw him towards her. At that he winced and gave a quick short breath, at which Madame released him with a sudden raising of her eyebrows and a glance at her companion.

'Well,' she said, 'you shall go to bed now. You are very dusty and dirty with your walk, and you must wash first.—Come with me, and I will show you where you can sleep.—Go thou, Achilles, and find Monsieur Vigne.'

The April shower beat noisily at the window, and the little man raised a hand and made a gesture to indicate it. 'Later on,' he said tranquilly.

Madame lit her candle and marshalled the boys up-stairs into a clean bare little room. There she superintended in a motherly fashion their toilet for the night, kissed them both, and left them to undress, warning them that the candle would be taken away in ten minutes, and bearing their shoes with her, as a precautionary measure against any attempt on their part to escape.

'Madame,' said the little man when she descended, 'permit me to tell you that you are a woman of a thousand. You have a good heart, Madame.'

'Is it to be a woman of a thousand to have a good heart?' Madame demanded.

'*Ma foi*, yes,' he answered. 'Your sex charms, Madame, and that is so much the worse for us. But the majority of you are not good for much. You are an angel; I admit it, I proclaim it. One woman? Yes. But women? Bah!'

Madame accepted the personal flattery and

impersonal blame with composure, and flourishing from her pocket a piece of knitting, began to work at it. Suddenly she looked up. 'The rain has ceased. Find Monsieur Vigne for me, Achille.'

He got up obediently and went out, returning in the course of an hour in company with a long lean Frenchman of about fifty, a stately man, so withered and dry that he might have been carved out of wood.

'Achille has told you of our little adventure of this evening?' his wife asked him.—He nodded in answer.—'You approve of what I have done?'

'Assuredly.'

'Come with me,' she said, pinching her lips and twisting her jolly face into an expression of mystery; 'I will show you something. But tread quietly; the children are asleep.' She led him to the chamber in which the boys were lying, and having first set the candle she carried upon the floor, softly turned down the bedclothes, and with a delicate womanly hand drew Will's sleeve higher than his elbow. Then she raised the candle and beckoned her husband, who raised his hands and his eyebrows and drew an inward breath.

'The poor little body is so from head to foot,' she whispered. 'I have looked. His face is so. Poor child!' She re-arranged the bed-clothes and beckoned her husband away.

'Who knows?' said he, turning to whisper on the landing. 'He may have merited it.'

'Jean!' she answered scornfully, 'how can a child of his years have merited that? He has not lived long enough to merit it, if he had been born wicked. It is only these English who treat their children so. If a man of our country did it, the people would tear him piecemeal.'

'There is cruelty everywhere, my dear Matilde,' said the husband mildly.

'Jean,' said Madame Vigne, thrusting the candle upon him so that she might use both hands in wiping her eyes with her apron, 'if our poor little Hector had lived, and we had died'—

'My dear,' said Monsieur Vigne appealingly, 'why harrow me with these thoughts? Whatever you do, I shall approve it.'

TOOTHACHE CHARMS.

POSSIBLY there is no pain so difficult to endure, and one that meets with so little sympathy, as the excruciating agony of toothache. In Norfolk, the poor sufferer from this malady is, according to the Rev. T. F. Thiselton Dyer, jeeringly taunted with possessing the 'love-pain.' Dean Swift has recorded that

A coming shower your shooting corns presage,
Old aches throb, your hollow tooth will rage.

But the 'grim mischief-making chiel' appears to be much more prevalent during the present age of thriving dentists, and waits not for approaching rain. Shakespeare, however, was evidently acquainted 'with a raging tooth,' or he would never have written,

There was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently;
and later, Burns has anathematised this malady

in a poem of six stanzas. There is little wonder, then, that amongst the vulgar and superstitious, all manner of charms have been in vogue to release the victim of this painful disorder from its thralldom. *Æsculapius* is credited with the honour of being the first to advocate the practical cure of having the tooth pulled out; but this severe method soon denudes a mouth of its most useful ornaments. From *Notes and Queries* we learn that the gypsies of Lincolnshire were accustomed to apply a poultice of finely scraped horse-radish to the wrist as a cure for the torture; on the right wrist, if the tooth were on the left side of the face, and *vice versa*. We have also heard of mustard plasters on the elbow, tape fastened tightly round the thumb, and a roasted onion on the big toe. These remedies, ridiculous as they appear, may have had the effect of diverting the nerve-affection to another part of the body.

Among the superstitions connected with this popular disease we observe that recognised saints preside over those afflicted with this disorder. Thus, in the little town of St Blaize, in Cornwall, St Blaize, who was martyred under Lucinius, was honoured, and candles were offered on his shrine for his intervention. A statue is erected to his memory in the church. Bishop Jewel in one of his expositions remarks that St Apollonius was specially invoked for the toothache; and in Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* we find the following quotation:

To Saynt Syth for my purse;
Saynt Loye save my horse,
For my teeth to Saynt Apolyne.

A church at Bonn, on the Rhine, contains a 'tooth of St Apollonia,' which is exhibited on the saint's particular day in a glass case, and kissed by devotees, to prevent the toothache, the priest carefully wiping the dental relic after each osculatory salutation. From Barnaby Rich's *Irish Hubbub, or the English Hue and Cry*, 1619, we extract the following: 'There be many miracles assigned to saints, that (they say) are good for all diseases,' and 'They have saints to pray to when they be pained with the toothache.' In Barnaby Googe's *Popish Kingdome*, in his translation of Naogeorgus, under the head of 'Helpers,' is the line,

Saint Appolin the rotten teeth doth helpe, when sore
they ake.

Southey writes, in his *Life of John Wesley*—a man who had much superstition in his composition—that when his teeth ached, he prayed, and the pain left him.

Many are the charms devised to rid an afflicted mortal of pain in his dental department—curious fancies of the superstitious. Even the Immortal Bard seems to have been aware of their existence, though he causes the contradictory Benedick to doubt their efficacy. Sir Kenelm Digby speaks of the custom of scratching the gums with a nail, and subsequently driving the latter to the head into a piece of wood while the blood is adhering to it. In Scotland, according to Napier, they were not satisfied of the validity of the charm until the iron had entered an oak-tree; whilst the *Dublin Magazine* tells us that in Oldenburg still further details are necessary: the sun must not observe the action, strict silence during the performance is indispensable, and the object is only achieved

when the metal becomes rusty. Some Dublin natives think it expedient to procure a sharp piece of wood, and early in the morning push it into a newly-made grave by the agency of the aching tooth. Another singularly unreasoning remedy is to pare the finger and toe nails, wrapping the superfluities carefully in paper, and placing the parcel in a slit in the bark of an ash-tree. The story is told of an old Rossendale lady performing this feat when a child, and never afterwards being troubled with the toothache.

The belief that the pain is caused by a worm is more natural, and is also mentioned by the Bard of Avon. Some lines we have seen on the subject run as follows :

Ruthless tormentor ! who, with constant gnawing,
Scoops thy dark caverns in my aching grinder
Like mining mole !

Derbyshire folk have an odd way of extracting the supposed creature. A small quantity of certain powdered herbs being placed in a cup, a hot cinder is thrown thereon, and the smoke inhaled by the patient, who afterwards breathes into a glass of water, where they then expect to see the worm. We have been eye-witnesses to a very similar process, the smoke from the herbs being in the interior of a basin, and boiling water immediately afterwards poured into the vessel, the steam from which the operator endeavoured to inhale. Thorpe, in his *Northern Mythology*, mentions an eel-shaped grub as a German belief of the cause of their trouble, for which they possess an incantation commencing,

Pear-tree, I complain to thee
Three worms sting me.

Shortland speaks of the idea existing in China and New Zealand, where an exorcism equivalent to the following is recited :

An eel, a spinyback ;
True indeed, indeed ; true in sooth, in sooth.
You must eat the head
Of said spinyback.

An old lady wrote in a Devonshire newspaper, that when she was a child, her father caused her to bite the back of a snake, he holding the head and tail, as a preventive against toothache. At Churcham, in Gloucestershire, a nurse, with the same object, made a custom of washing a newly baptised child's mouth with a portion of the remaining sanctified water.

A ridiculous idea for prevention is that prevalent in Sussex—the clothing of the right foot before the left with stocking, trousers, and boot. The old fancy of salting a drawn tooth and throwing it into the fire is still known in Scotland. In Cornwall some of the inhabitants expect to obtain an annual release by biting the first fern appearing in the spring.

From an Anglo-Saxon *Leech Book* we cull the following cure for 'jowl'-pain : Burn a swallow to dust and mix it with bee's honey ; to be eaten frequently. The afflicted in Staffordshire and Shropshire must watch a mole-trap, and immediately it is sprung and before the poor animal dies, its hand-like paws are to be cut off ; subsequently, they are worn, a right paw for the right side, and *vice versa*. In Wiltshire it is simply requisite to wear the forelegs and a hindleg of a 'want' (mole) in a bag suspended from the neck.

Those who were troubled with *tic douloureux* at Stamfordham, Northumberland, were accustomed to walk to Winter's Gibbet on Elsdon Moor, ten or twelve miles away, for a splinter of wood, which they believed would heal their complaint. Some credulous people preserve a double-nut in their pocket for the same reason. Here is a curious remedy : In Denmark, an elder-stick is put into the mouth and taken out and stuck into a wall while saying, 'Depart, thou evil spirit.' Rabelais speaks of washing the tooth with elder-vinegar and allowing it to dry half an hour in the sun. *The Journal of the Archaeological Association* tells of the Christmas images carried about in Yorkshire and decorated with evergreens and flowers, a single leaf from which was a sovereign remedy. The Toothache Tree is an exceedingly small deciduous one, having foliage similar to the ash, and is common from Canada to Virginia. Its name is derived from the fact that the hot acrid bark is largely used for the relief of the pain. The Angelica Tree, in North America, is also styled by the same name as the foregoing. In the Orkneys and north of England the following cabalistic words are carried about, the former place styling them wormy lines :

Peter sat on a marble stone weeping ;
Christ came past, and said : 'What aileth thee,
Peter ?'
'O my Lord, my God, my tooth doth ache !'
'Arise, O Peter ! Go thy way ; thy tooth shall ache
no more.'

There are many variations of this, and in Berkshire they substituted 'Bortron' for 'Peter.' In Craven and elsewhere, according to Carr, quoted by Halliwell, the gates of Jerusalem and the garden of Gethsemane take the place of the marble stone. One of Ashmole's manuscripts reads thus :

Mars, hurs, abursa, aburse ;
Jesu Christ, for Mary's sake,
Take away this tooth-ache !

A similar charm to the Peter one is used in France for fever. But we have said enough. Many of the above 'remedies' are now obsolete, and those still remaining doubtless owe their efficacy—when experienced—to the virtue of faith and the healing power of nature.

ASTBURY'S BARGAIN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS.

By CHARLES GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.—A LAST APPEAL.

BEFORE the mid-day train from London Bridge stopped at the Champion Hill Station, a man jumped out, staggered, and almost fell backwards. The porters shouted at him ; the passengers looked from the windows in alarm ; and the guard seized him till the station-master came up. His name and address were demanded with a view to ulterior proceedings for the offence of leaving the train whilst in motion.

The man was a stalwart young fellow, about twenty-eight or thirty ; good-looking, fair, with blue eyes and brown moustache and whiskers. He was pale, and evidently much agitated, not so much by the danger he had escaped as by other

matters which had induced him to risk it. He gave the required information calmly, producing letters addressed to him and to his employers to authenticate his statements, at the same time expressing his regret for being the cause of so much commotion. His name was Gilbert Astbury, confidential clerk to Messrs Ellicott & Co., ship-owners and ship-brokers, Fenchurch Street, and he resided at Herne Hill. He was at present engaged on most urgent business requiring his speediest return to the City, and that was why he had been so precipitate in leaving the train.

'Well, as no harm has come of it, I daresay you will hear no more about it,' said the station-master good-naturedly; 'but don't try it again, for that was a narrow squeak. I recollect seeing you at this station before.'

'Yes,' rejoined Astbury, smiling faintly, 'you may have seen me alight here many times before.—Thank you. Good-day.'

Clutching a little black leather bag tightly in the left hand and his umbrella in the right, Astbury made his way hurriedly along the then rural footpaths of Dulwich Fields. But he saw nothing of the bright spring verdure—the rich grass and the budding foliage of the trees—around him. At the corner of the old and long disused graveyard near the entrance to the village he turned up a green lane and hurried on, unconscious of the perfume from the hedgerows or the merry chorus of birds busy nest-building. Along the lane were the newly erected mansions of City magnates in glaring red brick pointed with white, and the glass of large conservatories flashed in the sunlight. But there was an ancient farmhouse with black-looking out-buildings and haystacks, round which were cocks and hens, whilst in the meadows cows were browsing on the rich pasture. Here and there, too, was an old-fashioned cottage, standing well back from the roadway, in the midst of a garden where the cultivation of vegetables was combined with that of flowers, and thus preserving some of the rural characteristics of the place. The gaudy and ugly new Dulwich College glared at the passer-by from a little distance; and farther on, the Crystal Palace glistened and shimmered dazzlingly in the eyes.

Before the white-painted gate of one of the old-fashioned cottages Gilbert Astbury halted. It was a modest and comfortable-looking dwelling, clematis, rose-trees, and Virginia creeper striving which should do most to adorn the front and curtain the windows; whilst a vine of many years' growth nearly covered the south, and thick-growing ivy the north gables. A small well-trimmed lawn was bordered with flower-beds, and the gravel path leading to the doorway was smoothly rolled. The kitchen and fruit garden behind the house was, as auctioneers would say, well stocked and productive. One experienced a pleasing sense of neatness and comfort even in looking over the gate, in spite of the gloomy but fine old cedar tree which stood in the centre of the lawn and gave the Cottage its name.

This was the residence of Mrs Silverton, the widow of a medical gentleman who had left her with an annuity of four hundred, an only child—a daughter—and an orphan niece to take care of. The doctor had died at the comparatively early age of forty-nine, and circumstances had not enabled him to amass more than enough to ensure

for his wife the annuity of four hundred which expired with her. Cedar Cottage was, however, her own property; and being a shrewd practical woman, she succeeded in keeping her place in the 'fashionable society' of the district without incurring debt or displaying any sign of undue pinching to make ends meet. Indeed, some people said that she managed to make a greater show with her limited income than many could do with four or five times the amount. She certainly contrived to give her daughter Henrietta ('Hetty') the best education the girl could attain; and the orphan niece, Daisy, had a full share of these advantages.

As Gilbert Astbury passed through the gateway, a young lady, fair, tall, and with soft light-blue eyes, advanced from beneath the shadow of the cedar to meet him. She wore a simple dress of dark cashmere; and her head being uncovered, a mass of silken hair, plainly brushed back and plaited, was visible. The features were somewhat irregular, and yet there was an inexpressible charm in her expression—tenderness and trustfulness were in the eyes and on the soft nervous lips.

'Why are you here at this hour, Gilbert?' she inquired anxiously. 'Has anything been discovered?'

'Yes; I have discovered something which will make me happy or miserable for life. I have discovered something which will save your cousin or destroy her. Is she in the house?'

The girl's lips quivered, her eyes brightened as if tears were nearly forcing their way over the lids, and her whole form seemed to suffer from a sudden chill. But Gilbert was as unconscious of these signs of agitation as he had been of the aspects and voices of happy spring-time whilst coming along.

'Yes. But she is not very well, and—perhaps she will not be able to see you,' answered Daisy with hesitation.

'I must see her—for her own sake,' he responded resolutely as he passed on.

She looked after him with sad eyes for a moment; then she turned away, and with bowed head returned to the seat under the cedar and picked up the magazine she had dropped on seeing him at the gate.

He did not knock at the door, but opened it and walked into the drawing-room. Although the sun was bright, fires had not yet been discontinued for the season, lest stray visitors should find the afternoons chilly; consequently, there was a pleasant blaze in the grate. Finding no one in the room, Gilbert rang the bell, which was answered by a smart parlour-maid, who appeared to be surprised by the presence of the unannounced visitor. 'Please tell Miss Silverton,' he said, 'that I wish to see her on business of great importance.'

'Miss Silverton has told me to say that she is too ill to see any one to-day, sir.'

He took out a note-book and wrote hastily: 'The business on which I wish to see you concerns Dacon as much as myself. I ought to say, concerns him *more* than myself.' On a writing-table in the corner of the room he found an envelope, and into it he put his brief note. 'Give this to Miss Silverton, please,' he said quietly.

The servant answered mechanically, 'Yes, sir,' and departed.

Whilst waiting her return, he placed his black bag on the table, unlocked it, and taking from it a small packet of papers, began to glance over their contents.

The servant returned in a few minutes with the answer: 'Miss Silverton's compliments, and regrets that she is unable to see you.'

He was bitterly disappointed; but he was too anxious to resent the refusal of an interview, or the cold conventionality of the phrase in which it had been conveyed. Such a response might have been made to a charity collector or a begging impostor, but was altogether an insult to an old friend who had once been regarded almost as a favoured lover. Moreover, as a distant relation of Mrs Silverton, he had been for years regarded almost as one of the family, and treated as if he had been the brother of the girls. He had never before, however, presumed on the freedom which had been allowed him in the house. He presumed now.

'Is your mistress at home?'

'No, sir. She went out after lunch, and said the young ladies were not to wait tea for her.'

'Very well. I am going to write to Miss Silverton, and when I ring, you can take the note to her.'

'Yes, sir.'

He sat down at the writing-table and wrote as follows, without any of the customary formalities of address:

'You must see me for your own sake and his. Proofs of guilt are in my hands, which I will use or destroy according to the nature of the answer you give me to one question I have to ask. But the answer must be given to me by your own lips—here and now. If you refuse, I go straight to Scotland Yard, be the consequences what they may to me, to you, and to others. You need not fear that I am going to plague you with any reproaches about my disappointed hopes, etcetera—the bitterness and pain with which that "etcetera" is put down here I hope you will never realise. I simply ask you to see me for a few minutes in order to help me to a decision in a crisis which will determine your fate and mine for good or ill. I am ready to bear anything—disgrace, ruin, even the doom of a convict, if I can only save you pain. But you must yourself help me to determine which of the two courses will be the most kindly to you.'

He affixed only his initials to the letter, and having enclosed it in an envelope, he summoned the attendant. She came quickly, for curiosity had prompted her to be close at hand. She took the letter to Miss Silverton.

Whilst waiting her return, he went to the window. He saw Daisy watering and tending the plants in the flower-beds as calmly as if she had no care in the world but them. 'Ay, there is the bliss of life,' was his bitter reflection, 'to care only for those things whose failure to answer our expectations can be remedied by the planting of a new seed or sprig. She does not know what it is to have only one flower in the garden of life—one flower which can never be replaced—and to find it withering in spite of the tenderest care. She will be lucky if she never knows it.'

The door opened and closed. Turning quickly,

he saw Henrietta Silverton. Like her cousin, she was fair; but the eyes were of a deeper blue, whilst the hair was lighter, the features more regular, and at a first glance the whole face more attractive—even beautiful. The lips were soft and ruddy; and yet they had a knack of contracting when she was annoyed, as at present, which gave them a false appearance of firmness. The eyes, too, when the long lashes were lowered, gave an impression of coldness which had really no part in her warm impulsive nature.

'You have forced me to come to you,' she began hesitatingly; 'but it is quite true that I am not feeling well, and I hope you will tell me at once what is this question you wish to ask me, on the answer to which so much depends—as you say.' She could not help the emphasis of doubt laid on the word 'you.'

His first impulse had been to advance and take her hand, but he checked it at the sound of the last three words. 'Everything depends on it,' he answered excitedly. 'The whole happiness of your future—of your mother's and of my future—depends on it.'

'Ask, then, and let me answer,' she said with apparent firmness, as if she had prepared herself for the worst ordeal through which she might be called to pass. But there was a nervous movement of the tapering fingers, as they played with the tassels of her scarf, which belied her courage. 'I count upon the promise in your note that you will confine yourself to this one question.'

He looked at her for a moment sadly and earnestly. He saw that she was really ill, and that it had been no mere conventional excuse which had been offered for her first refusal to see him. He wished he could spare her pain; but it was not in his power to do so. 'I shall be as brief as I can; but you must forgive me for dividing my question into two parts. The first is to me the least important. Tell me, in your thoughts of the terrible suspicion hanging over Henry Dacon and myself, which of us do you believe innocent?'

Whatever degree of trepidation she experienced at the first sight of his troubled face vanished now. There was an indignant flash in her eyes as she gazed at him steadily. 'If one of you two has perpetrated this fraud,' she replied deliberately, 'Henry Dacon is not guilty.'

'I expected that would be your answer; but I am too indifferent to my own fate now to mind it much. I would have liked, however, to know that you of all others had faith in me.'

'I did not say I believed you guilty.'

'You seemed to do so as plainly as words and manner could express your meaning.—But let that pass,' he went on despairingly. 'Here is the second part of my question—does your happiness depend on his safety?'

'My life depends on it,' she replied with a glow of devotion on her face and a fervour in her tone which left no doubt that she spoke from heartfelt conviction.

'Are you sure—quite sure of that? Would nothing make you change your mind?' He spoke with a faint tremor in his voice, as one who is making a last feeble appeal for the mercy

he knows will not be granted. 'Would no proofs—would not even his own words convince you that he has done me a cruel wrong?'

'No!—no proofs would satisfy me that he has done wrong to any man. Even if it were possible that I could have a moment's doubt of the honour of the man who is to be my husband, it would certainly not be inspired by anything *you* could say or show me. I am sorry that you should have again suggested it, for I was trying for the sake of our former friendship to think better of you.'

'I must thank you for the effort, although it has been unsuccessful,' he commented with a painful flicker of a smile on his now perfectly white face. At the same time he was busy turning over each paper of the packet in his hand, as if seeking some special one.

She was irritated even more by his smile than by his words, although they in her ears contained a sufficiently insulting sneer to rouse her indignation. But the smile she regarded as one of contempt—never thinking that acute pain was the more probable cause of it—and she spoke angrily.

'Even supposing you are blameless in this dreadful business, do you think I do not understand the motives by which you are actuated in attempting to dishonour Henry in my eyes?—You who should have been the first to defend him!'

'And wished to be.'

'Do you think I can forget, as you have done, that you owe him everything—your rapid promotion—your prospect of a partnership in a firm in which, but for his noble generosity, you might have gone on for years earning the wages of an ordinary clerk?'

'I have not forgotten anything he has done for me, and I am grateful,' said Gilbert huskily as he pulled out the document he had been seeking. 'I came to London with no better prospect of being speedily able to earn a living than thousands of others who arrive daily without friends or introductions. I had only two chances—the first that your mother might, on the strength of my distant kinship, recommend me to some one who could give me employment; the second, that my old schoolfellow Henry Dacon might in his proud position still remember me and help me. He did remember me—you did not know him then—and he did help me. He did more for me than my vainest expectations could have looked for. He helped me to a situation at once; by his assistance I won in a few years the position which gave me the right to think of you and even to speak to you—you did not know him then.—Oh, I remember all, and I am grateful.'

There was such a mingling of sadness and bitterness in his tone that it was impossible to divine which element predominated. He made no reference to the fact that his own ability had early attracted the attention of Mr Ellicott, the head of the firm, and won the rapid promotion which no influence unsupported by merit could have secured for him. As he finished speaking he unfolded the paper he had taken from the packet and appeared to read it.

'And you show your gratitude,' she exclaimed with increasing resentment, 'by this new attempt

to degrade him in my eyes! You do this—you, Gilbert Astbury—you who pretended to care for me so much that my happiness was your first concern in life—you who pretended that to ensure my happiness there was no sacrifice that you would not make. This is how you show the truth of your fine words—by making me miserable because I have chosen him instead of you.' She was conscious that in the presence of his apparent calmness her outburst of passionate reproaches was a sign of weakness, and she was ready to cry with vexation at her inability to control it.

'One word more,' he said earnestly. '*Suppose* it should be proved that he was guilty'—

She interrupted him with a cry of rage, and turned to the door. Passion again banished all weakness. 'Even if all the judges and juries in the land found him guilty of the greatest crimes and sent him to a felon's jail, I would still believe him innocent. I would wait for him ten—twenty years, and be the first to meet him when the prison gates were opened for him, and offer him my hand. I would try with all my life's affection to comfort and to help him to forget the degradation which he had been wickedly condemned to endure.'

As she made this declaration there was something strangely, almost startlingly beautiful in the fair face with the halo of impregnable, undoubting love upon it. To win such a love as that what would not any man give?—to be *worthy* of it, what would not any man sacrifice? So thought Gilbert as he carefully tore into fragments the paper he had taken from the packet, whilst he moved towards the fireplace.

'Do not go yet—stay only a minute. I am going, and you are not likely to see me again.' He was dropping the fragments of paper into the fire as he spoke, and they made a merry blaze which seemed to mock at his misery. When the last bit had turned into a black film and a draught from the partly opened door had whisked it up the chimney, he replaced the packet in his bag. 'There is no more to say. Good-bye.' He was at the door, holding out his hand; but she drew back, startled by his abrupt manner, and he misunderstood the movement for one of refusal to take his hand. 'Good-bye,' he repeated hastily. 'God bless you; and may you never have cause to be sorry for the answer you have given me to-day.'

The outer door had closed behind him before the dazed girl could recover from the bewilderment caused by his words and conduct. The burning of that paper with so much care and deliberation had perplexed her sorely; and rousing herself, she darted to the fireplace to see if any scrap remained on which might be found some legible words to give a clue to the meaning of his action. But the work of destruction had been too thoroughly accomplished to leave the faintest trace of what the paper had been, or what had been written on it.

Then the girl sat down and cried. Angry as she had been with her visitor, she was sorry for him, because she liked him. He had been a trusted friend and companion; and he had introduced Henry Dacon to her. Naturally, too, she had a kindly regard for the man who had wished to marry her, and who, until quite

recently, had borne his rejection patiently. But she could not help his disappointment when he discovered that she liked Dacon so much as to prefer him before all others as the man to whom she was ready to entrust her future. It was not her fault that she should prefer him. Love was not a fault, and could not be got up to order. *Can* love be regulated in its growth to suit convenience, prudence, circumstances, and climate? All history and fable answer—'No.'

But Gilbert had been a dear friend, and he was now under a very dark cloud. She would have liked to show her sympathy for him—would have been glad to speak any comforting words of hope at her command; but his conduct in attempting to shield himself from blame, as she fancied, by accusing his friend had closed her mouth and suppressed the sympathy she would willingly have given him. And now, when he had vexed and worried her almost beyond endurance, she could not help feeling sorry for him—he looked so very ill when he said: 'God bless you; and may you never have cause to be sorry for the answer you have given me to-day.'

The words, the burning of the letter, and his manner, bewildered and distressed her exceedingly. So she could only find relief in tears, and wish that Henry would come soon to help to explain Gilbert's mysterious behaviour. Of course, whilst speaking to him and in her rage, it had been all plain enough: a rejected lover was simply doing his best and worst to oust his rival from the first place in her regard. But now that he was gone, and she could remember the many traits of a brave, upright, generous nature displayed by Gilbert during years of friendly intercourse, in which, if there had been evil in his character, some sign of it must have been manifested—now, when she remembered this and could think over it, she could only feel bewildered and sorry for him.

The source of all the trouble lay in the recent discovery that a series of gigantic frauds had been perpetrated on the firm of Ellicott & Co., the extensive ship-brokers and ship-owners. No one had been yet directly accused of the crime; but investigations were in progress, and suspicion pointed to one of two persons, because they alone seemed to have it in their power to perpetrate the frauds. Henry Dacon, nephew of Mr Ellicott, the head of the firm, and a junior partner, and Gilbert Astbury, the confidential clerk, were the only persons in England who had the right of access to the documents and information, the possession of which rendered the frauds possible.

The position of the first named seemed to place him beyond suspicion; and little doubt was entertained as to who the real culprit must be. But John Ellicott, in his seventieth year, was still a clear-headed, strong-willed man, and sternly just. He would pronounce no opinion: he would accuse no one until the proofs of guilt had been fully collected. Therefore the investigation proceeded without any arrest being made, and the two suspected persons were presumed to be giving their utmost aid in its prosecution. The assistance of the police had not yet been called for, as Mr Ellicott desired to avoid fuss and scandal until he could say: 'There is the forger—arrest him.' He was the more strongly moved to this

course as there was a bare possibility that a third person might be involved in the crime, and that person was the most important and most trusted of the foreign agents of the house. The possibility was so very remote, however, that his name was not mentioned.

At Cedar Cottage the terrible cloud which hung over them had been talked about in confidence by Dacon and Gilbert. Naturally, it produced the greatest anxiety and excitement in the breasts of the three ladies, who had so far carefully preserved the secret from their most intimate friends. There were, however, mysterious rumours in the City and mysterious paragraphs in the money articles of the leading daily papers which at length so clearly indicated the house of Ellicott & Co. that the crisis was at hand when the whole transaction must become public and pass into the hands of the police.

It was at this juncture that Gilbert paid his hasty visit to the Cottage, and left it with that look of absolute despair which only appears when a man knows that his doom is sealed, and that no earthly power can save him from utter ruin and disgrace.

He did not observe Daisy put down the watering-can and advance to meet him as he was walking blindly towards the gate. She was frightened by his expression, and clasped his arm with her soft hand. 'You are very ill, Gilbert,' she exclaimed. 'What has happened?'

He smiled faintly as he took her hand, pressing it gratefully; for there was no mistaking the depth of the girl's solicitude on his account. 'Little more has happened than I expected, Daisy; and yet that little makes all the difference in the world to me. You will not see me again—or if you do, it will only be to shun me and feel ashamed that you ever called me your friend.'

'I shall never feel that,' she responded quietly; 'and you ought to know it. Whatever misfortune may happen to you it cannot alter my regard for you.'

'I believe you think so now,' he said with a melancholy movement of the head; 'but you do not know—you cannot guess what you will soon hear about me. All the same, I wish I could thank you as I would like to do for the comfort your words give me.'

'I won't believe anything I hear about you if it is bad,' was her decisive comment, and with shrewd instinct she went straight to the point: 'You have persuaded Hetty to see you, and she has been unkind to you. So you are in the dumps, and fancy that all the world is against you. You have been bothered and worried about this nasty business in the City. You have got ill over it, and consequently you are looking at everything through a false glass which distorts the appearance and meaning of all that you see.'

He smiled again faintly. She was so much in earnest in her endeavour to cheer him that she helped him more than she could have imagined to bear the heavy burden he had resolved to take upon himself. They were standing under the shadow of the cedar tree, and his voice was full of subdued emotion.

'Thank you again, Daisy, for what you have said. I shall remember the words all my life

—they will always be the most precious memories of this bitter day. Good-bye.'

Although he uttered the last word in the manner of one who is taking leave of a dear friend for a long time, Daisy refused to accept it in that sense. So, with affected confidence, she inquired: 'When are we to see you again?'

'I do not know—maybe you will never see me again.'

'Are you going away anywhere?'

'Yes; I start this afternoon on what will probably be a very long journey. I do not yet know what my destination is to be.'

'But you will write and tell—aunt?'

'There will be no letters,' he answered gloomily.

'I think you are trying to frighten me, Gilbert,' she ejaculated with a shade of impatience, as they parted at the gate.

She watched him hurrying down the green lane, and fancied that his steps were somewhat unsteady, as if from exhaustion. At the old graveyard he halted, looked back, and seeing Daisy, waved his hand. Then he turned the corner and was out of sight.

STATION-MASTERS.

BY ONE OF THEM.

THE position of a station-master is not arrived at in a day. The average number of years for which a man has to work before he attains this post is about twelve. There are men, and many of them of great practical experience, who have been aiming at this position for twenty years or more, and have not reached it yet; and may never do so. It is the same on railways as in the army, navy, and the professions: influence, to some extent, is almost indispensable; and though men of marked ability have risen in the railway service by virtue of their own merit, still these instances are few and far between. Soldiers and sailors cannot all be generals and admirals, neither can every railway servant become a general manager. The French soldier is taught to believe that he carries a marshal's bâton in his knapsack; so might every railway man be taught that the seal of a general manager is within his grasp. If these honours are never attained, both services will profit by the energy displayed by the members in attempting to attain a position that is held by very few men within half a century.

Simple though the duties of a station-master may appear, yet only years of experience can make him equal to his work. He has often to give orders and decide points which, without the necessary experience, would cause him to be in constant trouble. The ability to cope with his work has grown with him, and it is seldom that he proves incompetent in that respect. There certainly have been men appointed to this position who have been unfit for the post through want of knowledge and experience; but it is the same in almost every occupation. There are favourites at every court, and they can also be found in all grades of life down to the workshops, and their promotion has to be submitted to, whatever their abilities may be.

Into the ears of the station-master are poured all the grievances of railway travellers. He has to hear insult levelled at the Company which

he has the honour to represent. The wrath of the 'commercial' who has missed his connection with a certain train is poured on to this official's head, who for the time being is the Company, and who for the time being wishes he had not the honour of serving. Railways, like many other corporations, become fair game for the public to swindle and abuse: the abuse can be borne; but even railways show fight when they are being 'done'; and were it not for the sharp justice dealt out at police courts, railway investments would be about as lucrative as South American or Turkish bonds.

Station-masters are generally divided into three classes according to the importance of the station; but even then there is a great difference in the position of men belonging to the same class, so that six classes would show more correctly their relative position. From the highest to the lowest station is a very great fall. York and Birmingham are two of the largest and most important stations in the provinces, and Damens in Yorkshire is probably the smallest. The station-master at the latter place is signalman, porter, and booking-clerk combined; and the offices and waiting-room used to consist of one hut not much larger than a bathing-machine, and might have been carried away bodily by two or three men. Yet the official who represents the Company at this station can rub shoulders with his swell confrères at the two large stations mentioned. He of Damens is as much station-master as the others; and he knows when his orders are executed and when his work is done, and he accepts his wages with an easy conscience. At large stations, there is often a deputy or assistant station-master, who of course will have all the hard work to do; while his superior looks on and walks the platform as a captain does his quarter-deck. The deputy will give all orders to the men, having first received them from his chief, who is the responsible head of the station, which includes booking-offices, parcel, left-luggage, and telegraph offices. He also has a certain amount of control, as far as order is concerned, over refreshment rooms, lavatories, and cab-stands. He has no power to dismiss any servant of the Company, but can suspend them, which means that the servant so suspended ceases work, and does not resume it till his case has been considered by the superintendent of the line, who may fine or dismiss the person offending, as he thinks fit. Suspension is therefore the great deterring power in a station-master's hands. During the time that this edict is in force, the man's pay ceases, so that even if he is reinstated without a fine, he loses a considerable sum, as his case is hardly likely to be dealt with within a week.

To the general public, the station-master at large stations is unknown, and it cannot be said that his life is the common one belonging to this class. We must go to smaller stations to see the typical station-master. There he may be seen at all hours, and on all days attending personally to the trains as they come and go. He may be proud or affable, liked or disliked; but he is sure to be known, and it is to him that all travellers go when misfortune overtakes them. A person meeting with an accident, or a passenger being taken suddenly ill at his station, is under his care. If there is a drunken

row in a carriage, the guard appeals to him, and he decides what is to be done. A passenger is over-carried; he hears the case, and sends him back, or makes him pay the excess fare. An old lady losing her luggage appeals to him for his assistance to find it for her, but not always in a lady-like manner. At junctions, his greatest trouble is to decide whether connections are to be maintained when trains are running late. He may have certain instructions what to do, but they do not cover all contingencies, and his decisions may not always meet the approval of his superintendent; he will in that case get a letter, which will say just enough to upset him for a day or two, and everything will appear to be going wrong, for troubles do not come singly, not even on a railway. Besides his own mistakes, he is held responsible in a great degree for those of his staff. A stupid booking-clerk, who cannot or will not book passengers by right routes, will cause some more cutting letters to be received from headquarters; and if the station-master is a sensitive man he feels these rebukes; but, as a rule, his skin is pretty thick; and thick it will have to be if he intends to enjoy life under the usual conditions of the service. His time is never his own, at least theoretically, for he is not supposed to be absent from his station without leave; and even those hours claimed for sleep are sometimes surrendered to the service of the Company. A knock may come at his door in the small-hours of the morning, and a voice will call out: 'Up express off the road at Rolten Siding; both lines blocked, sir.' From his bed he will have to rise, whatever the weather may be, and act as pilot till the road is clear, or till some other official comes down to take charge. Some station-masters have had this sort of summons three times in one week; and when it is borne in mind that his wages cover all these extra duties, it cannot be said that his office is a sinecure.

As a rule, the station-master is not a grumbler, and lives and works in the hope of promotion—a hope that is often deferred, and that has often made his heart sick. Yet with all the petty annoyances he may have to suffer from the public, and the disagreeable letters he may get from headquarters, the life of a station-master may be a pleasant one. The peculiar excitement which most people feel who are travelling for pleasure is unknown to him; but in their outgoings and incomings he finds a source of great interest; and if he cares to study the phases of human life or character as depicted in the human countenance, he has on his platform daily the chance to do so. Strange faces pass him hourly, faces that linger in his memory for days together, and others that are no sooner seen than they are forgotten. To-day, a wedding party will occupy his mind; to-morrow may see his platform filled with mourners. Picnics, school-parties, partings and meetings of children with their parents, are ever engaging his attention, and the mutability of life is ever being brought to his notice. His life is a kaleidoscope, and no two days are the same. At times he may be curt and snappish, and so are we all; but as a rule he is affable, though perhaps a little distant; but no more should be expected from him than from any other public servant.

A house is generally provided for station-masters rent free, which also includes coals and gas. These houses, as a rule, are well built, but with no pretence to architectural beauty; a garden is often attached to them; but where there is not one, the adjacent embankment is brought under cultivation. On some of the lines, notably those running south of London, horticulture at the stations is encouraged, and prizes are given for those that are most ornamental and attractive. Of course a great deal depends upon the station itself, for some of them would defy the power of a Sir Joseph Paxton to beautify. The lines running north of London depend chiefly on the goods and mineral traffic for their dividends, and the appearance of stations then becomes a very secondary matter.

Gardening is perhaps the chief outdoor recreation of the station-master; he has no time for cricket, football, or angling; and even his walks must have a limit, for he must be near his station at all times, in case of emergency. But if he is somewhat of a prisoner in the summer months, he is better off in the long winter evenings; for though he has to be on the spot, he can finish his work when he likes, and indulge in the comfort of his own fireside to his heart's content. Many of them are well-read men; but a genius in literature has not yet appeared among station-masters, unless we can claim Patrick Brontë, brother of the immortal Charlotte Brontë, as one of us. He was for a time a station-master on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway; but his restless spirit could not exist in the monotony and confinement inseparable from a small country station, and he ultimately broke the bonds of discipline only to return home and go from bad to worse. There he ended his wild career in an early death, amidst scenes sorrowfully described by his sister Charlotte, who, though so good herself, could yet love and pity her erring brother. Had he lived and reformed his character, English literature would undoubtedly have been enriched by his pen.

Station-masters have risen to the highest office on a railway, and though with some men this position may be considered the end of their promotion, with others it is but the beginning. It is the first step in which a man comes in actual contact with officers of the executive, and his abilities become known to those who can further his advancement in the service. Many appointments in the colonies are open to him, as nearly all the executive officers of our colonial lines are filled from the home railways. As a class of men, station-masters may be said to live to a good age; there are many between sixty and seventy years of age who are in active service; but as a superannuation fund exists on most lines, they are expected to retire at the age of sixty. After a lifetime in the service, the peace and quietness of retirement is not always appreciated, and many of them leave their old surroundings with a miserable feeling of having nothing to do. They will go daily to the railway station, and each visit impresses more and more upon their mind the fact that they no longer belong to the service; they feel their position, and this feeling becomes a disease. It is noticed that they have not visited the station for some time, and inquiry makes the reason

known. They have taken to bed, worn out with the trouble of having severed their connection with the railway and having nothing more to live for. That they have arrived at the terminus of their life's journey is the next and last thing that is heard of them.

MY PET.

If you were asked, reader, to guess what my pet is, or rather *who* he is—for he is, I hope, important enough to admit of my dispensing with the neuter gender—I am sure you would not succeed in guessing. Well, then, I may as well tell you that he is a small orang-outang, or what should perhaps be more correctly termed a 'gibbon.' There are not a few who do not know what a gibbon is. Let those in ignorance of what a funny little animal he is, turn to that entertaining work called Wood's *Natural History*, where they will find the gibbon most accurately described. At the time, however, that the work alluded to was written, the gibbon of the island of Hainan (in the China Sea) was unknown, and is not therefore described in it. The white-faced gibbon of the Straits is mentioned; but his jet-black relative with bushy hair and handsome face was left out. What a true prize a black gibbon is! Most affectionate in his nature, possessed of a pleasing voice and winning ways, he is truly a good companion.

My office, in the last port where I was stationed, looked over the sea, and had a veranda outside it, which of course was kept sacred. I was sitting one day in my office-chair, looking out over the bay beyond, to collect my thoughts for a despatch then in hand, when I espied a Celestial coming along the veranda with some dark object in his arms, the dark object showing its appreciation of the attention it was receiving by placing two arms of inordinate length round the man's neck. I naturally rose up to see what this phenomenon was, and having been told that it was a rare animal, I at once made overtures for his purchase. As soon as negotiations were concluded, I fastened my purchase—a black gibbon—to my copying-press, instead of sending him up to my house, being anxious to introduce him myself to my two dogs and to Joseph the cat. I could not entrust a rare animal to my servants, lest the introduction through their agency to Joseph and the rest might result in some disaster. When I fastened the gibbon to the press I took no account of the length of the animal's arms, and I was therefore not a little surprised when a black hand took possession of a red-and-blue pencil and a black mouth began to eat it. Nature is said, in her beneficence, to instruct the lower animals what to eat and what to avoid. That no doubt applies to an animal in the wild state, such animal being directed by instinct where to find an antidote to anything deleterious which it may have eaten. An animal in captivity must, however, be treated differently, and must not be allowed to do as it likes. So I reasoned; and as I had no herb ready to correct the evil which I knew would result from eating a pencil, I proceeded to recover the stolen article. Though my new pet did not mind being touched, though he would jump into your lap and make himself at home, he strongly objected to part with anything which he had once got hold of, and a

good deal of diplomacy had to be used before I repossessed myself of the pencil.

Scarcely was this fun at an end, before some black fingers were dipped into the ink; and when the ink was removed out of reach, the gum-bottle was next turned over, the gum being particularly appreciated. Thinking that the animal might be thirsty, I put a saucer of water before him; but though easy to put the saucer down, it was impossible to pick it up again, even though there was not a drop of water left in it. It seemed to me, on reflection, that I had made a bad purchase. I did not clearly see how I was to feed an animal that was so intractable, and I had serious misgivings that my new pet would give me a lot of trouble, and quite likely would die in three months. Monkeys are generally supposed to be troubled either with heart-disease or with consumption, and to endure captivity for a short time only. Thus, I had given my gibbon three months to live, and I fully expected that before four months had passed he would be under a glass case in my drawing-room. I am extremely pleased to say that, at the time I write—more than two years since I purchased him—he is still alive, though I must confess it has not been easy to rescue him from the jaws of death on several occasions.

At first, the name of 'Sambo' was given to the gibbon, on account of its jet-black colour; then this was changed in course of time to 'Samuel,' the little fellow becoming too respectable to be called Sambo. At the last port at which I was stationed, the lower windows of my dwelling-house were provided with iron bars—about five inches apart—as a protection against thieves. These bars were a great convenience to me, as I could attach Sam to them at meal-times, thus keeping him out of mischief whilst giving him plenty of freedom. The question of feeding Sam was not an easy one to tackle. If we sat down and began eating before he was served, the most noisy protests were made; and when the saucer of rice was put down, there was no one courageous enough to recover the empty saucer. The point was often settled by Sam himself, who, having finished his rice, would throw the saucer into the air a few times—catching it very cleverly—and then hurl it away from him. A wooden bowl was found to answer better; but this also received much rough usage, and had to be repeatedly renewed.

One very noticeable feature about Sam was his extreme jealousy. If I stroked the cat in his presence, he used to get into a paroxysm of rage and make great efforts to bite me. He would be almost as much vexed if I patted the dogs. When a guest came to luncheon, he was so angry at the intrusion that he often had to be removed. He would absorb all the conversation until removal, it being quite impossible to keep him quiet. He had a singular objection—he has it now in a mild way—to anything being removed by the servants; and had he been fastened to my chair instead of the window, no plate once put on the table could have been removed. When in the drawing-room with me—and he was often there—he would even fly at my wife if she attempted to touch the tea-things. At this date he has sobered down a good deal; but even now, though a servant may bring me a letter, he must not take away a reply if Sam

is with me. He objects to any one coming near me; and if my wife shakes my coat, or even touches my shoulder, he catches hold of her, though now perhaps more in play than in anger.

His disposition has naturally changed during his long captivity, and I am therefore obliged to speak of his actions in the past tense. Sitting up, Sam measures sixteen and a half inches; but his arms are twenty-three inches long. He is jet black all over, has fur as thick as that of many animals which live in cold climes, and the hair on the top of his head grows up into a point, which naturally enhances his personal appearance. His nose is flat, and is doubtless more useful than ornamental. He has a good voice, and whether he calls out for his food or expresses his delight at seeing you, his notes are equally agreeable. When I take him his bread and milk at half-past six every morning, he shows his gratitude in a queer way: prostrating himself, he makes what no doubt are eloquent speeches in his own language. After he has spoken for some time and made numerous faces, he takes hold of my hand and hugs it. Until he has gone through this elaborate performance, he will not touch his food. Though his diet should consist of rice and fruit only, he often has bread and jam, and too often a slice of cake. He has no objection, moreover, to either rice-pudding or plum-pudding. When his appetite shows signs of weakness, an egg beaten up in milk revives him; and symptoms of fever call for a little quinine mixed with sugar. I never give Sam tea. Tea makes such animals nervous, and has other deleterious effects on their constitutions, which need not be particularised here. Orang-outangs taken to Britain are generally dosed with tea on arrival, and are given an inordinate quantity of fruit to eat. Very little fruit is required, and care should be taken not to give too much water. In their wild state, gibbons no doubt eat a large quantity of fruit; but then nature comes to their aid if ill effects arise, and points out to them the herb which will cure them. In captivity, they do not get much exercise, and science can do very little for them when bodily ailments occur.

If Sam breaks loose in the summer, he helps himself liberally to bananas: if his rope gives way in the winter, he makes his way to the drawing-room; there he warms himself, and having done this, he jumps on the sofa, pulls an anti-macassar over him, and goes to sleep.

When I go into the garden, I release him altogether. He jumps from tree to tree, to the great amazement of the Celestials, who watch his movements from hillocks outside my grounds, and occasionally he comes down to have a game with my two pups. It is not a common sight to see a gibbon loose, nor can you always get a picture of a gibbon and a dog rolling over and over each other in play. Perhaps some of my readers may at one time or another have kept gibbons. If they have, they must have been struck with the singular way in which gibbons quench their thirst. The young gibbon does not put his mouth to the water when he wants to drink; he dips his left hand into it and sucks the back of his fingers, the hair which is on them taking up about half a teaspoonful of water at a time. As he grows older, he shakes off this youthful folly, and then

dips his head into the water and sucks the fluid up in the same way that a horse does. What the gibbon lives on in his native wilds it is impossible to say; but he evidently has a predilection for spiders' webs. My pet clears away all webs within his reach, and not liking to leave the owners of them homeless, he devours them too. He is very fond of hard-backed beetles; but these delicacies are now strictly forbidden, as they are not calculated to agree with bread and jam or with rice-pudding.

It was not an easy matter to keep Sam alive in the tropics: now that he is not only well out of the tropics but in a region where the winters are severe, one may well despair of being able to preserve him. During the twenty-seven months which he has now spent with me, he has been my constant companion. He went with me to the office when I was in the south of China: he goes with me now that I am in the north. In the south he used to pull the hats of my chair-coolies off: here he continues this play, varying it by pulling my hat off and throwing it out of the chair. At the office he constitutes himself my special guardian, making strong protests against any one approaching my desk. He will allow a stranger to go up to him and scratch his head; but he makes the noisiest demonstrations possible if any one ventures to shake hands with me or touch anything on my desk. If I leave my house in the morning without him, he speedily lets me understand how sore in spirit he is, and I have eventually to take him. Sometimes I am reluctant to take him, as he pulls things about at the office, and on the way to the office he swoops down on any fruit which may be within range. If he captures a pear or an apple, he returns with it to the sedan-chair in great triumph, showing as much pleasure in his face, and making as much noise as a child does when given a piece of cake of more than ordinary richness or a lollipop of extra quality. I am so well known here, that itinerant fruit-vendors know where to apply for compensation for thefts committed. There is no ill feeling created; indeed, there are roars of laughter when the 'black monkey,' as they term Sam, makes a good seizure. I have to keep a string of 'cash' at the office to pay for Sam's depredations.

SOME SOCIAL SLIPS.

'I BEG your pardon, madam, but you are sitting on my hat,' exclaimed a gentleman. 'Oh, pray excuse me; I thought it was my husband's,' was the unexpected reply.—In another instance of conjugal amenities, a wife said to her husband: 'I saw Mrs Becker this morning, and she complained that on the occasion of her last visit you were so rude to her that she thought she must have offended you.' 'Nothing of the kind,' he answered. 'On the contrary, I like her very much; but it was rather dark at the time, and when I entered the room at first I thought it was you.'

'Poor John—he was a kind and forbearing husband,' sobbed John's widow on her return from the funeral. 'Yes,' said a sympathising neighbour; 'but it is all for the best. You must try to comfort yourself, my dear, with the thought that your husband is at peace at last.'

A gentleman had accompanied a friend home to dinner, and as they seated themselves at the table, the hostess remarked: 'I trust that you will make allowances, Mr Blankley. My servant left me very unexpectedly, and I was compelled to cook the dinner myself.' 'Oh, certainly, my dear madam, certainly,' responded the guest with great emphasis: 'I can put up with anything.'

Another amusing slip took the form of an unhappy after-dinner speech. There was an entertainment given by an earl deservedly popular. It was extremely handsome, and champagne flowed freely. The evening was well advanced when a benignant old gentleman rose to propose a toast. He spoke with fluency, but somehow he said exactly the opposite to what he meant. 'I feel,' said he, 'that for a plain country squire like myself to address this learned company is indeed to cast pearls before swine.' Never was so successful a speech made. He could get no further for many minutes. The company applauded vociferously and as though they would never cease.

'Now, Miss Brown,' said an earnest listener, 'won't you play something for us?' 'No, thank you,' said the lady; 'I'd rather hear Mr Jones.' Earnest Listener: 'So would I, but'—Here he was stopped by the expression on the young lady's face; and he looked confused for half an hour after she had indignantly turned and left him.—A person who was recently called into court for the purpose of proving the correctness of a surgeon's bill, was asked whether the doctor did not make several visits after the patient was out of danger. 'No,' replied the witness, 'I considered the patient in danger as long as the doctor continued his visits.'

A physician walking with a friend, said to him: 'Let us avoid that pretty little woman you see there on the left. She knows me, and casts on me looks of indignation. I attended her husband.' 'Ah! I understand. You had the misfortune to despatch him,' was the remark that slipped out. 'On the contrary,' replied the doctor, 'I saved him!'—A guest at a country inn exclaimed: 'I say, landlord, your food is worse than it was last year!' 'Impossible, sir,' was the rather ambiguous reply of the landlord.—'Why,' said a counsel to a witness, 'are you so very precise in your statement? Are you afraid of telling an untruth?' Witness (promptly): 'No, sir.'—At a recent inquiry into the sanity of a young man of large property, witnesses were being called to prove that he was unfit to manage his affairs. A curious slip was made by a schoolmaster when asked if he had formed any opinion as to the state of mind of the alleged lunatic. 'Oh yes,' he replied: 'I can certify he is an idiot. He was one of my favourite pupils.'—'I have met this man,' said a lawyer with extreme severity, 'in a great many places where I would be ashamed to be seen myself;' and then he paused and looked with astonishment at the smiling court and jury.

Here are a few other instances of something very like putting one's foot in it. The legislature of a Western state having a bill under consideration for the regulation of tax collectors, an honourable member got upon his feet and said: 'Mr Speaker, I go in heavy for that bill. The tax-collectors are all a set of knaves. I was one myself for ten years.' The bill

passed.—'How are you getting on in your new place?' asked a lady of a girl whom she had recommended for a situation. 'Very well, thanks.' 'I am glad to hear of it,' said the lady. 'Your employer is a nice person, and you cannot do too much for her.' 'I don't mean to, ma'am,' was the innocent reply.

Here is a naive declaration from the prospectus of a weekly paper: 'The staff, with the exception of the editor, has been very carefully selected, and deserves to secure success.'—A Californian newspaper is said to have been sued for libel by a widow for speaking of her deceased husband as having 'gone to a happier home.'—'Dear sir,' said an amateur farmer just from the country, writing to the secretary of an Agricultural Society, 'put me down on your list of cattle for a calf.'—A certain caravan orator at a fair, after a long yarn descriptive of what was to be seen inside, wound up by saying: 'Step in, gentlemen; step in! Take my word for it, you will be highly delighted when you come out.'—'Allow me, madam, to congratulate you on your acquaintance with that charming lady,' said a gallant Hungarian; 'she is young, beautiful, and intelligent.' 'Oh, certainly,' replied the lady. 'But don't you think she is a trifle conceited?' 'Why, madam, just put yourself in her place, and say would you not be conceited too?' was the rather startling comment.

This social slip is even worse. A City man complained bitterly of the conduct of his son. He related at length to an old friend all the young man's escapades. 'You should speak to him with firmness and recall him to his duty,' said the friend. 'But he pays not the least attention to what I say; he listens only to the advice of fools. I wish you would talk to him.'

DIFFIDENCE.

My lady sits beside me, and her eyes
Are deep with distant thought;
From pearl-strown Persian sands a richer prize
No diver ever brought.

For Love is purified by suffering;
The chambers of her soul
Have held the moaning of the tides that bring
Death's galleys on their roll.

Would that I heard the music of her speech!
Still in her silence she
Can teach what Wisdom's voice could never teach,
Were that to tutor me.

For Love himself is warder of the gate
That leadeth to her heart;
He opened the door for me, and there I wait
Till she bids me depart.

Planet and star rise clear and strong above;
Grant, Heaven, they be not all
The lights of the chapelle ardente of Love
Before his funeral.

J. WILLIAMS.

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